



Aruba's College Fair offers offered students the "key" to the future

The Renaissance Convention Center was a beehive of activity on Friday and Saturday, November 10 and 11, as Aruba's fourth College Fair attracted thousands of students and parents. Muzaninn Wever, President of the Aruba College Fair Foundation reports that they had twenty-one international universities take part this year, aside from local institutions and businesses, totally over fifty organizations represented at the 2006 fair.

The fair, which was begun by Mary Wever-Lacle in 2000 during her tenure as Minister of Education, takes place every other year. It not only offers the island's youth information on various schools, but also career choices, as various local companies and the military service are also present.

This year the fair was divide not only by category, but geographically, with schools from the States, the Caribbean and Europe occupying separate sections. Another room, reserved as a lecture hall offered a variety of speakers throughout the day with essential information for planning one's future. The procedures to obtain student funding, for an example, was one of many topics of importance to obtaining a college education.

Muzaninn particularly gave thanks to Meta Corporation for their cooperation in conducting the fair, plus Antraco for donating the computers for the cyberstation, and SETAR, NV for providing the internet access. Inquisitive youth were able to access and research the various institutions represented, and take a virtual tour of their campuses at the different websites. She also mentioned Valero Refinery Aruba as a substantial contributor to the success of the fair.

Working in cooperation with the Xavier University School of Medicine, one of Aruba's two medical schools, was the Aruba Institute for Higher Education, (AIHE) run by Jason Margarita. The AIHE offers a program that works with students offering individual tutoring, providing them at the end with an accredited American High School Diploma, which will give them entrance to the medical school if they have the grades to qualify. Its reasonably priced program is ideal for students with ambitions to attend university in the States. More information about their program can be obtained at www.arubaihe.com.

The Coast Guard of Aruba and the Netherlands Antilles also showed that they were an equal opportunity military service, as two of their female officers aside from a male, fielded questions from the curious considering it as an option for a career. Various financial institutions were also present to explain to parents and children how they can arrange to keep them funded through local banks, while the students access the funds from far away.

Aruba's College Fair was exciting and informative, incorporating modern technology to allow Aruba's youth a window to what the future can hold for them. The fair is privately funded and organized by volunteers with the future of the island and its youth their primary concern. The results were well worth a visit, even if just to chat with the various representatives, and many that attended with their parents still have years to go until they will make use of the information. The fair provided information and answered questions that assist in giving them direction and possibilities. Most expressed they are looking forward to the next college fair in 2008!